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SUBJECT: ESTONIAN REACTION TO 2007 TIP REPORT

Ref: STATE 78403

¶1. (U) On June 13, we delivered reftel points informing the GOE of the release of the 2006 TIP (trafficking in persons) Report and Estonia's Tier 2 status to Mai Hion, MFA Director for Human Rights. Hion was pleased that the Report acknowledged the progress the GOE has made in combating TIP - principally in implementing its National Action Plan (NAP) to combat TIP and increasing its anti-TIP budget. Hion said the GOE remains committed to the full implementation of the NAP and making new anti-TIP funding permanent.

¶2. (SBU) In discussion with Poloff, Hion was receptive to suggestions that Estonia improve its regional and international cooperation to identify, repatriate, and assist Estonian TIP victims abroad. Asked whether the GOE intended to introduce trafficking-specific legislation, Hion said the Ministry of Justice plans to re-examine the effectiveness of the 15 articles of the criminal code the GOE uses to prosecute TIP crimes. The GOE will then consider whether a TIP-specific statute is necessary.

¶3. (U) Hion repeatedly asked for U.S. assistance to improve its anti-TIP program. Specifically, she requested training to improve Estonia's inter-agency coordination and outreach to NGOs. While the GOE has made progress on both counts, Hion admitted that more there is still room for improvement and any assistance from the USG would be greatly appreciated.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: We found Hion focused on the substance of the fight against TIP, rather than on the nuances of tier classification and cross-country comparisons. This is a positive sign and, we believe, one that reflects the increasing sensitization and growing commitment of GOE officials to anti-TIP efforts.

PHILLIPS